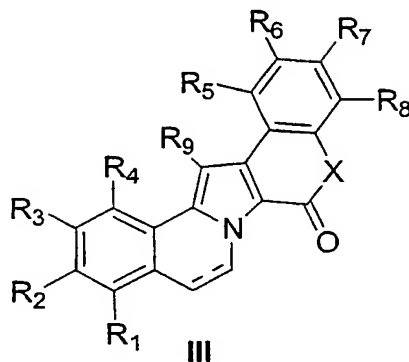


CLAIMS:

1. A compound of the general formula **III** :



wherein X is selected from the group consisting of N, O and S;

wherein R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, R₆, R₇, R₈ and R₉ are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, OH, OR', SH, SR', SOR', SO₂R', NHR', N(R')₂, N=R', NHCOR', N(COR')₂, NHSO₂R', NO₂, PO(R')₂, PO₂R', C(=O)H, C(=O)R', CO₂H, CO₂R', OPO(R')₂, OPO₂R', OC(=O)H, OC(=O)R', C(=O)R', N=C(R')₂, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₂ haloalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₂-C₁₂ alkenyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₂-C₁₂ alkynyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or unsubstituted aralkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroaromatic;

wherein each of the R' groups is independently selected from the group consisting of H, OH, NO₂, NH₂, SH, CN, halogen, =O, C(=O)H, C(=O)CH₃, CO₂H, C(=O)R', substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₂-C₁₈ alkenyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₂-C₁₈ alkynyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ alkoxy, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ aminoalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ aminoacid, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ thioalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ alkylsulfinyl, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₁₈ alkylsulfonyl;

wherein the pairs of groups R₁ and R₂, R₂ and R₃, R₃ and R₄, R₄ and R₉,

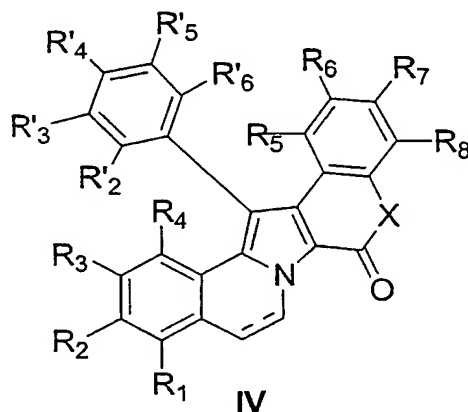
R₄ and R₉, R₉ and R₅, R₉ and R₆, or R₆ and R₇, R₇ and R₈ may be joined into a carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring system;

and the dotted line represents an single or double bond;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, derivative, prodrug or stereoisomer thereof;

with the proviso that the compounds are not known lamellarins.

2. A compound according to claim 1 characterized in that it has formula **IV** :



wherein R₁-R₈ are as defined above and R'₂-R'₆ have the same definitions as for R₁-R₈ above;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, derivative, prodrug or stereoisomer thereof.

3. A compound according to claim 1 or 2 characterized in that X is preferably O or N.

4. A compound according to claim 1 or 2 characterized in that X is O.

5. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 4 characterized in that the dotted line is a double bond.

6. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 5 characterized in that each of R_1 - R_8 is independently selected from H, OR', OC(=O)R'.

7. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 6 characterized in that R_3 is selected from the group consisting of H, OH, alkoxy, preferably methoxy.

8. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 6 characterized in that R_4 , R_5 , R_6 and R_8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H or alkoxy.

9. A compound according to claim 8 characterized in that R_4 , R_5 and R_8 are H.

10. A compound according to any of claims 1 to 5 characterized in that R_1 , R_2 and R_7 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, OH, alkoxy, OC(=O)R', OSO₂R', OPO(R')₂, O-alkyl, NO₂, NH₂.

11. A compound according to claim 10 characterized in that R_1 , R_2 and R_7 are OC(=O)R' wherein R' is a substituted or unsubstituted aminoacid or aminoacids chain, preferably with a cationic group.

12. A compound according to any of claims 2 to 11 characterized in that R'_2 , R'_3 and R'_6 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H or alkoxy, preferably H.

13. A compound according to any of claims 2 to 12 characterized in that R'_5 is selected from the group consisting of H or alkoxy, preferably methoxy.

14. A compound according to any of claims 2 to 13 characterized in that R'_4 is selected from the group consisting of H, OH, alkoxy, $OC(=O)R'$, SO_2R' , $PO(R')_2$, Alkyl, NO_2 , NH_2 .

15. A compound according to claim 14 characterized in that R'_4 is $C(=O)R'$ wherein R' is a substituted or unsubstituted aminoacid or aminoacids chain, preferably with a cationic group.

16. A compound according to any of the preceding claims characterized in that at least one of R_1 - R_8 and R'_2 - R'_6 is not H, OH, OCH_3 , SO_3Na , preferably at least two are not H, OH, OCH_3 , SO_3Na .

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound as defined in any of claims 1-16 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, derivative, prodrug or stereoisomer thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or carrier.

18. The use of a compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 16 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, derivative, prodrug or stereoisomer thereof in the preparation of a medicament.

19. A method of treating a tumour which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 16 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, derivative, prodrug or stereoisomer thereof.

20. The use of compounds as defined in any of claims 1 to 16 or pharmaceutically acceptable salts, derivatives, prodrugs or stereoisomers thereof as topoisomerase I inhibitors.